The year-wise Size of SEWP and releases made to Assam are given as under:

(Rs. in Lakhs)

Year	Size of SEWP	Release
2005-06	344.40	160.00
2006-07	521.92	Nil
2007-08	1333.60	Nil

Funds could not be released to the State during 2006-07 for want of their performance Report and U.C. Release of funds during 2007-08 is also held up for want of audited U.C. from the State for the funds utilized during 2005-06.

Fall in cane price

1384. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the fall in the price of cane would be a perennial problem for the farmers, the industry and all the stakeholders including the Governments at the State-level;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the measures being taken to improve the condition of cane farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The Central Government fixes, for each sugar season, the Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane payable by the sugar mills to the cane growers for the sugarcane supplied by them and there has been no fall in SMP of sugarcane as indicated below:

(Rs./quintal)

Sugar Season	SMP	Recovery level	Increase/Decrease in SMP
2005-06	79.50	9%	-
2006-07	80.25	9%	0.75
2007-08	81.18	9%	0.93

(c) In order to help the sugar industry to clear the cane price arrears of sugarcane farmers, the Central Government has taken the following steps:—

(i) A buffer stock of 20 lac tonnes has already been created for a period of one year from 01.05.2007 to 30.04.2008. An additional buffer stock of 30 lac tonnes has also been created for a period of one year from 1.8.2007 to 31.7.2008. Creation of 50 lac tonnes of buffer stock would involve a subsidy amount of Rs. 945 crore (approximately) to be borne from Sugar Development Fund. The banks would also provide

additional credit of Rs. 1050 crore (approximately) on creation of buffer stock. The buffer subsidy amount and the additional credit are to be exclusively used for liquidation of cane price arrears of sugarcane farmers.

(ii) Export assistance to defray expenditure on internal transport, marketing and handling charges and ocean freight @ Rs. 1350/- per tonne for sugar factories located in coastal areas and Rs. 1450/- per tonne for sugar factories located in non-coastal areas (subject to actuals for export by road/rail to neighbouring countries) have been announced for a period of one year with effect from 19th April, 2007. The amount involved is Rs. 205 crore (approximately) which is to be borne from Sugar Development Fund. The export assistance is also to be used exclusively for cane price arrears payment.

(iii) Ban on export of sugar has been removed in January, 2007 and requirement of obtaining an export release order for export of sugar except for exports to EU countries and USA has been withdrawn *w.e.f.* 31.07.2007, for the current and next sugar season.

Additional funds for suicide belt

1385. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the reason for not processing the additional funds allocated for farmers in the suicide belt of Vidarbha;

(b) what is the actual additional amount required for farmers in the suicide belt of Vidarbha; and

(c) when the fund is expected to be finally released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) No such proposal is pending with the Government.

(b) and (c) Do not arise. However, Government of India has already approved a Rehabilitation Package amounting to Rs. 3873.26 crore for the farmers in six identified suicide prone districts of Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra namely Akola, Wardha, Amravati, Buldana, Wasim and Yavatmal. Upto 27th July, 2007, Rs. 771.26 crore and Rs. 1078.37 crore has been released by the Government of India and State Government of Maharashtra respectively for the implementation of the rehabilitation package.

Unabated suicide of farmers in Vidarbha

1386. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that suicide by farmers particularly in Vidarbha (Maharashtra) continued unabated;

(b) if so, the details of incidents of suicide during May, June, July, 2007;